

BRIEF 3: INITIATIVES AND DATA PLATFORMS FOR THE EMPIRICS OF HOPE

There are many initiatives that map and showcase positive trends and developments towards 'hopeful' Anthropocenes. In this brief, we provide an initial list of such initiatives together with examples of existing data platforms. This list is a starting point for engaging with existing information and can help identify gaps.

Initiatives

The **IPBES transformative change assessment**. The "thematic assessment of transformative change" will comprise an evaluation of factors within human society with the potential to be leveraged to bring about transformative change regarding the conservation, restoration, and use of biodiversity. Grounded within the broader goals of sustainable development, the assessment will explore factors at both individual and collective levels within society. The thematic assessment was adopted in 2019 as part of the new IPBES work programme for 2019–2030.

<https://www.ipbes.net/transformative-change>

Seeds of Good Anthropocenes is a collaborative project where initiatives, ideas, and practices are explored and developed to create positive visions of socially and ecologically desirable, just, and sustainable futures, thereby creating a suite of plausible "Good Anthropocenes". These examples, or "seeds", encompass innovative solutions, sustainable technologies, and socio-environmental strategies that promote ecological stewardship, social equity, and economic well-being. The project asserts the need to shift the narrative from the prevailing focus on sustainability problems and challenges to one that highlights the potential for positive change. <https://goodanthropocenes.net/>

The **Social Tipping Point Coalition** comprises a coalition of academics, universities, NGOs, grassroots organisations, and artists, among others. Originally formed to pressure the Dutch government to adopt a "Social Tipping Point Strategy", the Coalition advocates for rapid social changes to enable the achievement of the goals of the Paris Agreement and to avoid Earth system tipping points. The Strategy is based on the idea that by enabling social tipping points through structural improvements, relatively simple social changes accelerate transitions to sustainability.

<https://socialtippingpointcoalitie.nl/social-tipping-point-coalition/>

Earth Optimism is a global movement with the mission of reshaping the environmental narrative from one of despair to one focused on solutions and achievements. It asserts that emphasising fear without hope can lead to apathy rather than action. The movement is rooted in the realisation that there are numerous conservation success stories that often go unnoticed by the general public. Earth Optimism seeks to inspire positive change through evidence-based efforts and the sharing of success stories. <https://www.earthoptimism.cambridgeconservation.org/stories-to-inspire/>

EcoTipping Points is a nonprofit organisation that focuses on identifying and sharing stories of positive environmental change. The data that EcoTipping Points provides is qualitative in nature, and primarily in the form of case studies and narratives. These stories highlight instances where communities and ecosystems have experienced significant positive shifts as a result of sustainable and community-driven actions. EcoTipping Points is an inspirational and educational resource, demonstrating how communities and individuals can bring about positive ecological and social change.

<https://ecotippingpoints.com/our-mission/>

Systems Change Lab is a collaborative initiative, which fosters transformational change across various systems to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic inequalities. The Lab has identified necessary "key shifts", or critical transformations and changes that are required across systems to address global challenges, spanning areas like energy, transportation, industry, land use, and freshwater management. It has an open-source platform highlighting which shifts are gaining momentum, which are stalling, and which are regressing. Additionally, it provides insights into the driving forces behind these changes, allowing stakeholders to make more informed decisions.

<https://systemschangelab.org/>; <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/systems-change-lab>

The **Academy of Hope** is a research project based at Utrecht University's Urban Futures Studio. It focuses on developing innovative pedagogical approaches that resist fatalism and naïve optimism to address planetary challenges, particularly the transition away from fossil fuels. The project brings together various stakeholders, including students, policymakers, researchers, activists, and more, to collaboratively explore the possibility of envisioning a good life that doesn't rely on fossil fuels. <https://www.uu.nl/en/research/urban-futures-studio/initiatives/academy-of-hope>

Project Drawdown, a research organisation and database, focuses on climate solutions by collecting and analysing strategies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change. Their primary goal is to identify and promote the most effective solutions for achieving "drawdown," the point where atmospheric greenhouse gasses begin to decline. The Project Drawdown database includes quantitative data on climate solutions, such as renewable energy technologies, land use and agriculture practices, energy efficiency in buildings, and transportation. Continuously updated, this data often covers factors like emissions reduction potential, cost-effectiveness, implementation barriers, and co-benefits like improved air quality or job creation. <https://drawdown.org/>; <https://github.com/ProjectDrawdown>

General data platforms

Our World in Data is a platform and research initiative providing comprehensive and accessible information about global trends, challenges, and progress across various domains, including health, economics, environment, and social issues. It offers a collection of curated data, visualisations, and research articles, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and fostering a deeper awareness of complex challenges. <https://ourworldindata.org/>

Gapminder is a dynamic online platform that promotes a fact-based worldview by offering accessible and interactive global data and statistics. The website utilises visualisations and tools to depict key socio-economic trends, including income, health, and education, over time. It enables users to explore and understand complex global issues, and to challenge potential misconceptions and biases. <https://www.gapminder.org/>

The **World Values Survey** (WVS) is a global research project that investigates societal values and cultural beliefs across countries and regions. The WVS seeks to understand how people's values evolve over time and how they relate to social and political change. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>

The **Global Commons Survey** is a research initiative studying the attitudes towards transformation and the state of the global commons (including climate, life on Earth, freshwater, forests, oceans, ice sheets and other critical ecological systems). The survey is applied to G20 countries, and assesses public opinion, attitudes, and awareness regarding global environmental issues alongside the need for international cooperation to address them.

<https://globalcommonsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Global-Commons-G20-Survey-full-report.pdf>

We invite you to reflect on the following questions: What are other initiatives and data sources to be added to this incomplete list? Please add your ideas here: bit.ly/Brief_3_Initiatives_Data_Platforms. How can knowledge of change towards 'hopeful' Anthropocenes be amplified, communicated, and engaged with, in ways that stimulate action?

Please cite as Andrew Hattle, Cynthia Flores Santana, Dianty Ningrum, Caroline Schill, Peter Søgaard Jørgensen (2023) Initiatives and data platforms for the empirics of hope (Brief 3), The Anthropocene Laboratory, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm.

This work was funded by the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation, and the Marcus and Amalia Wallenberg Foundation.